



**THE CONSORTIUM**  
ACADEMY TRUST

# Child Sexual Exploitation Policy

The Consortium Academy Trust (TCAT)  
An Exempt Charity Limited by Guarantee  
Company Number 07665828

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Policy Owner (position)	Director of Education
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*\*NB – This document can only be considered valid when viewed on The Consortium Academy Trust website. If the copy is printed or downloaded and saved elsewhere the Policy date should be cross referenced to ensure the current document is referenced.*

## **1.0 Introduction and Commitment**

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) has become a growing and serious concern and is recognised as a form of child sexual abuse. The Consortium Academy Trust Child Sexual Exploitation Policy has a recognition of this concern and demonstrates our commitment to protecting and supporting the school community and working with partner agencies to achieve this. As such, this Policy falls within the established Child Protection and Safeguarding framework that is in place in academies and as documented in The Consortium Academy Trust Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

At The Consortium Academy Trust, we strive to support and teach learners about how to make positive choices and informed decisions in their relationships so that they develop awareness and can protect themselves from all potential forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. The Consortium Academy Trust promotes healthy friendships and relationships through the ethos, academy policies, learner-staff relationships and the curriculum. An awareness of the risk factors and signs and indicators of CSE is key for all staff, as is how to access support and guidance.

The purpose of this Policy is to create a considered and consistent approach to dealing with CSE at The Consortium Academy Trust.

## **2.0 Aims and Objectives**

- increase awareness and understanding of CSE within the academy setting
- raise awareness of the risk factors and warning signs of CSE with all members of the academy community
- provide relevant information and guidance on CSE, which is accessible to staff, parents/carers and learners.
- provide a consistent approach when dealing with CSE
- make available support for learners, parents /carers and staff in the event of concerns arising in relation to CSE
- enable those seeking help to feel secure and supported

## **3.0 Principles**

The following six principles underpin the CSE procedures and guidance and support the application of this Policy:

1. Child Sexual Exploitation includes sexual, physical and emotional abuse, and, in some cases, neglect
2. Children and young people do not make informed choices to enter or remain in sexual exploitation, but do so due to coercion, enticement, manipulation or desperation
3. Young people under 16 cannot consent to sexual activity: Sexual intercourse with children under the age of 13 is statutory rape (Sexual Offences Act 2003)
4. Sexually exploited children and young people should be treated as victims of abuse, not as offenders
5. Many sexually exploited young people have difficulty distinguishing between their own choices about sex and sexuality, and the sexual activities they are coerced into. This potential confusion should be handled with care and sensitivity by professionals
6. The primary law enforcement effort must be made against the coercers and adults who sexually exploit young people. In some cases young people themselves may exploit other young people, and in these cases law enforcement action may also be necessary.

#### 4.0 Definition and Overview of CSE

The Department for Education Child Sexual Exploitation Guidance for practitioners (and other key groups) February 2017 defines 'Child Sexual Exploitation' as follows:

*Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim wants or needs and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can occur through the use of technology.*

Sexually exploited children are rarely visible on the streets and are only a small part of the bigger picture of sexual exploitation of children by adults, other children and young people, which may include peer on peer abuse (KCSiE 2020). A growing number of the young people are being sexually exploited by adults and other young people via the Internet. This method of grooming children for abuse has contributed to the invisibility of the sexual exploitation of children. However, we must be aware that this is not the only format where grooming takes place and must not apply our prejudices around use of technology as adults.

Sexual exploitation involves both girls and boys under the age of 18. The children involved must be regarded as potential victims of abuse. Increasingly, victims are children under 16 years of age, from all communities and cultures and include a significant proportion of looked after children.

Vulnerability due to abuse, neglect, domestic violence and parental difficulties, disengagement from education, drugs/alcohol, homelessness, peers' involvement in sexual exploitation and association with 'risky' adults are the most common factors amongst children who are at risk of being sexually exploited. Strong links have been identified between child sexual exploitation and prostitution, running away from home, human trafficking and substance misuse, including 'County Lines' activity. Children Looked After are also particularly at risk of being targeted for sexual exploitation.

Children may be drawn into sexual exploitation by a young person of a similar age. Girls, in particular, are often coerced into sexual exploitation by an older male who targets an individual. They may see him as their boyfriend, and become physically, emotionally and sometimes financially dependent upon him. This may be reinforced by the use of alcohol and drugs. We must also be aware that boys can also be victim to CSE in a similar relationship.

Over time, access to friends and family may become restricted and the child becomes alienated from sources of support, which may be able to identify and interrupt the abuse. This is often referred to as the grooming process.

Sexual exploitation adversely affects the lives of children/young people and impacts on their physical and mental health, education, self-esteem and causes them to be socially excluded. This group may include children who have been victims of human trafficking.

It is important for members of the Trust to be aware that children/young people are capable of abusing their peers and that any allegations, disclosures or concerns about such behaviour are treated as potential abuse or CSE cases and referred to the DSL immediately. This includes incidents of behaviours that may have occurred outside of the academy community that staff

become aware of. Peer on Peer abuse can take the same forms as adult on child abuse and include online behavior such as sexting and bullying in addition to sexual or physical abuse and emotional abuse in the forms such as homophobic, disability hate, racist and other discriminatory behavior.

It is important that staff do not regard behaviour such as learners suffering sexual touching as 'part of growing up' or verbal abuse as 'banter' and are aware of the guidance in KCSIE 2020.

CSE methodologies and profiles vary significantly between geographical areas. The above methods are particularly relevant in the East Riding of Yorkshire and Hull locality where it is rarely 'gang' related. Though with ease of travel on major arterial routes to geographically more 'risky' areas we must be aware of the challenges this may present to children and young people.

## **5.0 Vulnerability Factors to CSE**

Children are **more** vulnerable to abuse through sexual exploitation if they have experience of one or more of the following, which can be referred to as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES):

- Child sexual abuse
- Domestic violence within the family
- Family breakdown
- Physical abuse and emotional deprivation
- Bullying in or out of the academy
- Family involvement in sexual exploitation
- Parents with a high level of vulnerabilities (drug / alcohol, mental health etc.)
- Drug / alcohol, mental health or other difficulties themselves
- Being looked after in residential care
- Going missing frequently – referred to in the Children Missing Education protocols
- Low Attendance

By virtue of regular contact with children and young people, academy staff are well placed to notice changes in behaviour and physical signs that *may* indicate involvement in sexual exploitation. Staff should also be mindful of the risks posed by CSE and remain alert to the potential for this and need to respond immediately. We must recognise that regardless of our community, this could happen to children and young people within our academies.

## **6.0 Responding to Concerns**

Any member of staff who has a concern, however small, about a child or young person should report this to their DSL as a Safeguarding concern immediately using the Academy based systems in place and well established (please refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for further information). The DSL and wider Safeguarding team will use the following as guidance when dealing with a reported incident which may indicate the child or young person is at risk of CSE:

### **Category 1 (At Risk):**

A vulnerable child who is at risk of being targeted and groomed for sexual exploitation

### **Category 2 (Medium Risk):**

A child who is targeted for opportunistic abuse through the exchange of sex for drugs, accommodation (overnight stays) and goods, etc. The likelihood of coercion and control is

significant

**Category 3 (High Risk):**

A child whose sexual exploitation is habitual, often self-defined and where coercion / control is implicit.

The concerns will be reviewed and appropriate action taken in line with The Consortium Academy Trust Child Protection Policy and Procedures and ERSCB and Hull Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance. Where appropriate consultation will take place with the Safeguarding and Partnership Hub (SaPH), where the risk is considered to be high and the Early Help and Prevention Locality Hubs where it is identified that further support work may need to be provided. For learners residing in Hull the appropriate agency will be contacted via the Access and Assessment Hub (Hull City Council)

A multi-agency approach, in line with local East Riding Safeguarding Children Board (ERSCB) and Hull Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance, will be adopted to ensure that holistic support is available – potentially involving partner agencies such as the Police, Children’s Social Care, School Nurse, the Child Exploitation Response Team and the Youth and Family Support Service.

**7.0 Prevention and training**

All academies within the Trust must ensure that CSE is part of the Annual Safeguarding update and refresher training. A core package of safeguarding training will be delivered to all staff that is role specific. In addition, the TCAT Internal Audit of Safeguarding and Whistleblowing will review the effective implementation of this Policy. Staff training and briefings will be used to share information and ensure that CSE is recognised as a potential cause for concern and source of risk and harm for the school community.

Key areas to include are:

- That CSE can take many different forms, i.e. it can occur both online and offline
- That CSE can affect any child or young person regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality etc.
- That all children are entitled to protection and support
- The procedures of reporting suspected cases of CSE, and how information should be shared with other local agencies should concerns arise
- The development of practical skills in facilitating conversations with learners, and with their parents, about CSE

Staff will be made aware of this Policy and the importance of ongoing vigilance and early intervention to prevent the likelihood for sexual exploitation and abuse occurring. Information relating to CSE will be on display across the academy sites, providing guidance and advice to learners and staff.

The issue of Child Sexual Exploitation will also be raised on different levels within the academies and will be informed by support and guidance from other partner agencies as appropriate:

- At a whole academy level - this will be achieved through staff briefings and learner assemblies which will provide information and guidance relating to CSE as well as the support available in the academy and through external agencies
- Information and guidance will be provided and reinforced through the PSHE Curriculum

and using theme event days and small group workshops.

- At an individual level – where concerns are identified or suspected (through information received or disclosed) a response will be designed in line with statutory safeguarding guidance and dealt with as a potential safeguarding concern. The academy's Safeguarding structure provides a support network that is readily available to individual learners and parents/carers and is readily available through a commitment to open access in event of concerns or worries. All expressions of concern will be taken seriously and investigated.
- It is accepted that all children and young people may potentially be at risk of online CSE and therefore, by way or response, The Consortium Academy Trust Community Trust has a robust E-Safety Policy to ensure learners are taught to recognise online risk and who to report any concerns to.
- The Consortium Academy Trust will commit to having appropriate staff complete CEOP training and attend ERSCB training on CSE appropriate to their role, to ensure that appropriate knowledge and skills are available to support the school community.

## **8.0 Confidentiality**

The Trust appreciate that some learners may feel anxious about seeking help due to concerns about sharing of information and confidentiality. We always strive to share information on a 'need to know' basis and manage information discreetly and sensitively. Therefore, information will only be shared in the child or young persons' best interest.

Staff are legally bound to share information if they feel the learner is at risk or is suffering from significant harm, and therefore complete confidentiality cannot be achieved.

## **9.0 Parental Involvement**

The academy will always seek wherever possible to establish a positive partnership with parents/carers and to work proactively to support learners and their families.

Parents have a key role in educating their children about CSE and, whilst it is not solely the responsibility of our academies to educate parents about CSE, academies should consider offering some education and/or training in order to support parents.

Academies should endeavor to offer advice and guidance so that parents:

- Understand the risks of CSE and recognise that the issue is something that could affect their child.
- Understand that CSE can occur both online and offline.
- Know the warning signs of CSE.
- Know how to report any concerns that they may have.
- Know where to go for support if their child has been the victim, or is the suspected victim, of CSE.
- Are reassured that services will, as appropriate, work with them to try to protect their child.
- Have support to manage the emotional impact of CSE on their child and themselves.
- Have support that is tailored to their specific circumstances, e.g. support that recognises culture or faith

If a concern is raised by either a young person or a peer, it would be usual to initiate contact with home. It is often the case that the parent/carer will be invited to attend a meeting with the DSL / Child Protection Officer and/or other relevant member of the wider staff support team. The learner involved will also be asked to attend this meeting if possible. The concerns raised will be discussed and an action plan may be formulated to address concerns.

In specific circumstances it may not be possible to contact parents/carers prior to sharing information and concerns with Safeguarding and Partnership Hub (SaPH)/Access and Assessment Hub. Professional guidance will be sought and every effort made to communicate with parents/carers as soon as possible whilst ensuring the safety and well-being of learners.

## **10.0 Monitoring and Evaluation**

- As with all Child Protection and Safeguarding concerns within the academy, the identification or disclosure of CSE will be recorded and securely stored. Information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis to ensure the safety and well-being of those involved.
- Any communication with home, or meetings with the child or young person will be recorded and the relevant bodies will be informed about issues or concerns.
- Senior staff and Governors will evaluate the effectiveness of this Policy and agree adjustments that may be necessary to address any on-going concerns. These will be shared with staff, parents/carers and learners.

### **How do we ensure that people are aware of the Policy?**

- Formal acceptance by the Trust Board
- This Policy will be made available to staff, parents and learners on The Consortium Academy Trust website (<https://www.consortiumtrust.co.uk/> )
- Learners will be informed about Child Sexual Exploitation and The Trust Policy through seminars/assemblies and academic teaching. This will be age and stage appropriate, but recognising the changing profile of victims.
- Learners can speak to members of staff about their concerns throughout the school day and will be offered support, advice and guidance.